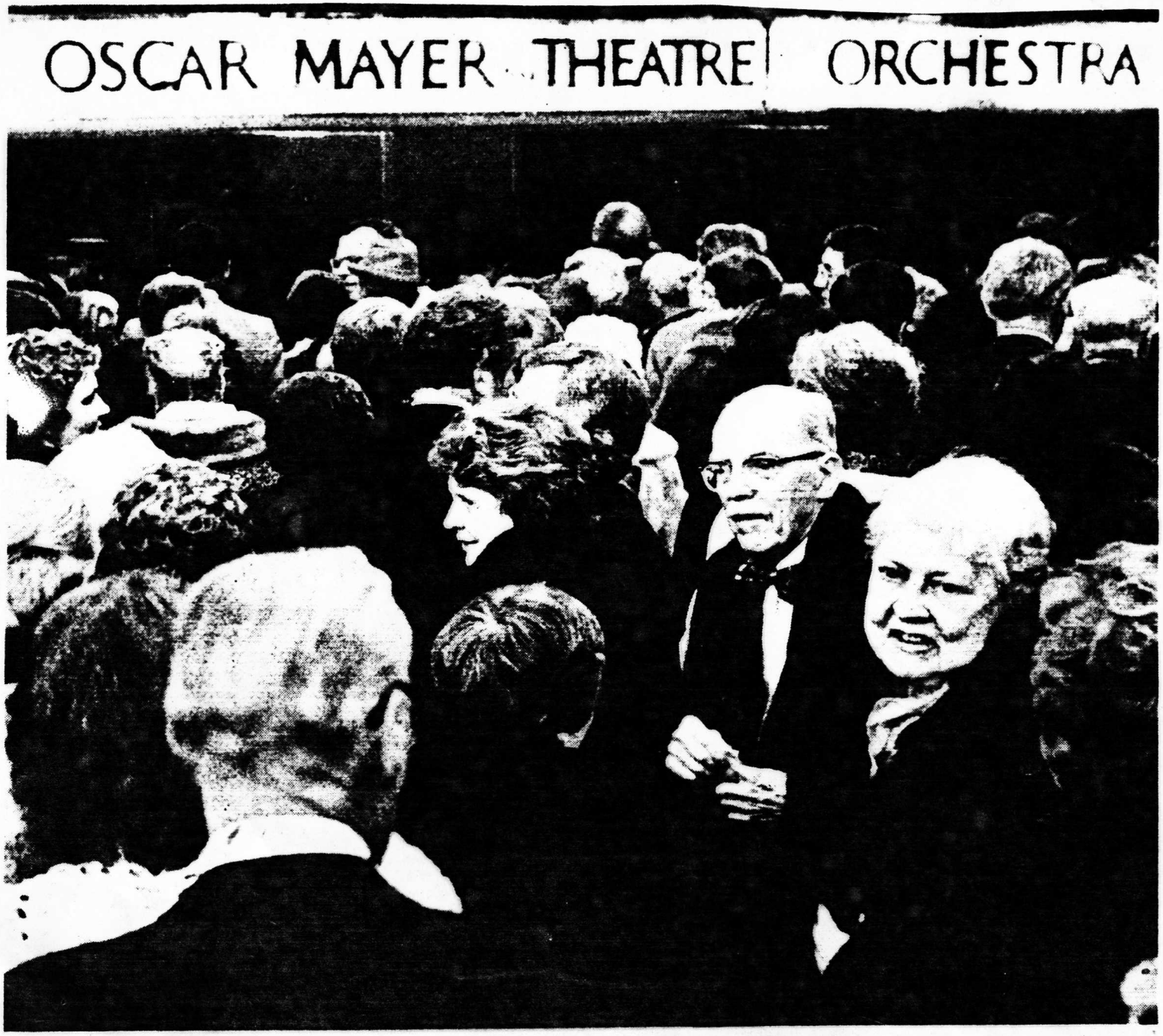

Concertgoers file into the Oscar Mayer Theater for Saturday's performance.

They saw, they heard, they enjoyed

The elderly woman, swathed in dark mink, sat alone on the steps of the Crossroads in Madison's new Civic Center which opened during the weekend. Around her swirled a sea of silk, satin and ruffled tuxedo shirts; flashes of jewelry caught the overhead light as excited patrons waved at friends or pointed out features of the $10 million structure.

The woman took it all in — as an estimated 15,000 visitors had done the night before. "I think it's nice," she said, "but confusing, too. It'll take me a while to figure out where everything is."

Then she smiled. "But there's still the thrill of coming the first night, too."

For the 2,200 persons who jammed the Oscar Mayer Theater for the opening night performance of the Madison Symphony Orchestra on Saturday night, only part of the fun was the stellar performance by the orchestra and opera-star Martina Arroyo. The rest was the chance to see and be seen, to get dressed up and turned out, to open the new Civic Center in style, to toast the long-awaited event with complimentary champagne.

After all, as one woman put it, "It's a nice time to have — and about time we had it!" She tugged at the long, velvet skirt of her formal dress and laughed. "After all, how often in Madison do you get a chance to get dressed up like this?"

2/25/80

Opening night concertgoers jammed the Oscar Mayer Theater of Madison's new Civic Center for the premiere performance Saturday